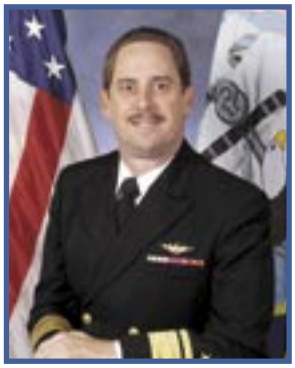


Final Launch: *Time for the Flyoff*

As I get ready to transition to civilian life, I wanted one last chance to thank maintainers for the work you did for and with me, now and in past years with various squadrons and commands.

I'm an aviator and grateful for the fine maintenance done to keep me and my fellow aviators safe. I always had the utmost faith that maintainers would give me the best jet possible.

In the spring issue, I praised you for the fine work you did in keeping maintenance-related and off-duty mishaps to a minimum. However, I'd be less than honest if I didn't mention that we've had a turn in the wrong direction.

I urge you to help with the problems that continue to plague us, including this quarter, an aircraft-handling error, MLG door that fell off an aircraft, dropped flare on deck, aileron crunch to a TE flap, and four FODs (a good example of why we featured that topic in this issue).

On the off-duty side, after a great start, traffic mishaps unfortunately are up again. As usual, most of them were preventable. Too often, drinking and driving, not wearing seatbelts, and speed killed a number of shipmates. Why are families suffering for these stupid mistakes? Why are Sailors and Marines not getting the message? Why do some people continue to ignore risk and not take the steps to mitigate it? I'd be lying if I said the answers to these questions don't frustrate me. We have wonderful, smart maintainers who get it right, most of the time, at work. Yet, off-duty, many throw caution to the wind.

The Naval Safety Center is seeking answers to all the "whys." We are taking steps to identify behavioral issues, better understand the reasons behind poor performance, and improve our numbers. But it will take each of you to look at each other and to work together to end the senseless damage and loss of life.

My time is up, but the Navy, Marine Corps, and RADM Artie Johnson, my successor, need your help. Troubleshoot the problem like you do aircraft, search for answers, and fix it. Your life and that of your shipmates hang in the balance. Thank you.

RADM George Mayer

Fight FOD to Save Lives

By Dan Steber

FOD Kills! Those two words appeared on an old FOD poster in *Mech* magazine. This simple statement is as true today as it was in the '60s when the poster came out.

This issue features a series of stories on the FOD problem we all face, and the battle we engage in every day. And one tool, the FOD walkdown, is part of a process that maintainers around the fleet do, whether in California, Hawaii, Japan, or a carrier off the coast of Iraq.

Incredibly, the Navy and Marine Corps spends about $90 million dollars on FOD-related damage every year, tens of thousands of hours fighting FOD or repairing its damage, and countless time worrying about this problem.

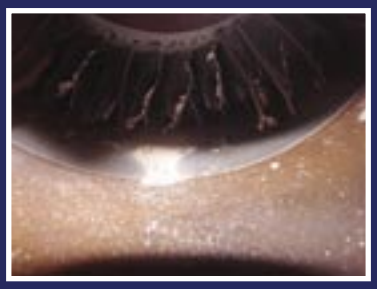
With FOD, it's important to think about new ways to attack the problem. Take action to mitigate the risk FOD poses and make it a challenge to improve the program. We have seen a wide range of products from the FOD Boss to the Tarsier FOD radar. Technology can and will help, but it's still the determined work ethic and keen eyes of maintainers that can make a big difference.

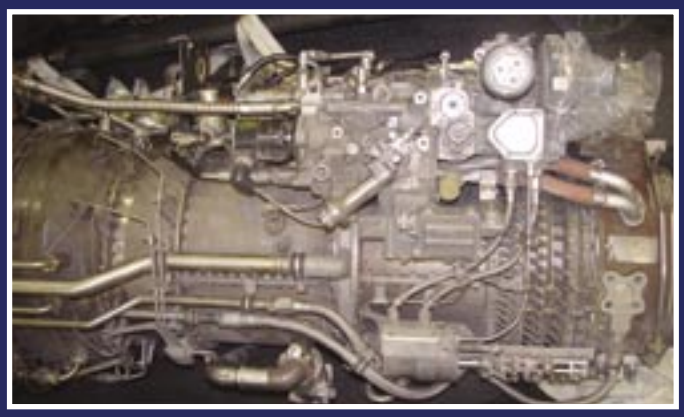
Look at the information and stories available in this issue and work to refocus your efforts at making your aircraft, hangar, flight line, or flight deck FOD free. We can save a lot of time, money and aircraft damage with the right mindset. You must make it a challenge that FOD won't happen in your workplace, taking action to make it true.

FOD IN THE DESERT

AVCM (AW/SW) Dave Clark, AIMD MMCPO, USS *Bataan*, sent these photos of FOD found in a T-58 engine from an H-46.

Dave commented, "We dropped off the Marines, and well…the sand seems to have won a round with the engine. Notice the peeling of the leading edges, and how the blades bent as the problem progressed. Notice the sand still in the intake. FOD wins."





FOD Cost and Repair Chart Captures the Scale of the FOD Problem and the Challenge for the Way Ahead

The overall number of repairs has decreased (blue line) because of reliability improvements and "build goals" that have been implemented over the last few years. FOD repairs (red line) also have decreased, but the percent of repairs has remained fairly constant. The number of engines repaired after a reported FOD event does not include the engines that are still awaiting repair or have been stricken. At the end of FY-06, 103 engines and/or modules reported as removed for FOD were awaiting repair or disposition. Another 109 had been stricken. A new effort called FOD forensics holds great promise as a way to breakthrough and make a big difference in the fight against FOD.